

Coordinated Investigation of  
Micronesian Anthropology  
1947-1949

Social Organization and Government  
in Micronesia

FINAL REPORT of G P Murdock

Pacific Science Board

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CIMA

Final Report of

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Social Organization and Government  
in Micronesia

Pacific Science Board  
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PART I.



## SECTION OF ANTHROPOLOGY\*

### ANTHROPOLOGY IN MICRONESIA

By GEORGE PETER MURDOCK†

Micronesia consists of a series of archipelagoes in the mid-Pacific which stretch east and west for about 3,000 miles on and just north of the equator. The Gilberts and Nauru Island in the south-east are British. The rest of the area is administered by the United States—Guam as an American possession, the

remainder of the Marianas Islands and all of the Caroline and Marshall Islands as a Trust Territory under the United Nations.

The United States Navy has for some years taken a special interest in these islands since it has been charged, first with the military task of wresting them from the Japanese and subsequently with the administrative task of governing their native inhabitants. Anthropologists have long been curious about the area because its ethnography has been little known, though suspected of containing clues es-

\* The Section of Psychology held a meeting on October 18, 1948, at which Doctor Edmund Jacobson, Chicago, Ill., presented a paper entitled *A Theory of Essential Hypertension in Man*. This will appear in the December issue of TRANSACTIONS.

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sential to an understanding of culture history in the farther Pacific. During the past five years, these two interests have been joined in a series of common enterprises, which have resulted in the accumulation of a wealth of new information useful alike in the improvement of administration and in the solution of scientific and historical problems. Previous to that, the ethnography of Micronesia was for the most part known only from a German expedition 40 years ago.

This cooperation began in 1943 when, with several of my anthropological colleagues at Yale, I was called into the Navy to assemble all the known information on the area and to summarize it in a series of Civil Affairs Handbooks. It was continued after the war when the Navy asked Felix M. Keesing of Stanford University to assist in planning and operating a School of Naval Administration for the training of officers sent out to administrative posts in the Trust Territory. In 1946 another anthropologist, Douglas L. Oliver, was called upon to organize an Economic Survey of the area; four anthropologists, along with other specialists, spent several months in the major islands and produced a series of valuable, though largely unpublished, reports. The CIMA program—the Coordinated Investigation of Micronesian Anthropology—is the latest in this succession of cooperative ventures.

CIMA was made possible by a substantial appropriation from the Office of Naval Research to the Pacific Science Board of the National Research Council, supplemented by a generous grant from the Viking Fund, Inc., and by contributions from a number of participating institutions. With these funds, and with transportation, supplies, and local facilities also provided by the Navy, the Pacific Science Board has been able to send into

Micronesia during 1947 and 1948 some 40 scientists from 22 different institutions—human geographers, linguists, physical anthropologists, and specialists in culture and personality, though the largest group have been general ethnologists or cultural anthropologists.

Since scientists will naturally be more interested in the results of the expedition than in the details of its organization and operations, I shall attempt a preliminary synthesis. It should be recognized that this will be in the highest degree tentative since, in addition to the findings of the Yale team on Truk, I have thus far seen only the final reports of Chave and Spoehr on the Marshalls, of Murphy on Mokil, and of Buck and Elbert on Kapingamarangi. These I have supplemented from my knowledge of the previous literature, from brief personal visits to Ponape and Palau, from a couple of days of intensive field work on Truk with natives from Puluwat, and from correspondence and brief conversations with some of those who have worked in Kusaie, Ponape, the Mortlocks, Ifalik, Yap, and Palau.

The main cultural divisions or subareas of Micronesia are by now fairly clear. Proceeding roughly from east to west, they are as follows:

1. The Gilbert Islands.
2. Nauru.
3. The Marshall Islands.
4. Kusaie, the easternmost of the Caroline chain.
5. Mokil and Pingelap.
6. Ponape and the adjacent atolls.
7. The Polynesian outliers of Nukuoro and Kapingamarangi.
8. The Nomoi or Mortlock group and nearby atolls.
9. Truk and the Hall Islands.
10. Puluwat, Pulusuk, and Pulap.
11. The so-called Central Carolines, *i.e.*, Ifalik, Woleai, and other atolls east of Yap and south of Guam.
12. The Marianas Islands, including Guam.
13. Yap, in the West Central Carolines.

14. Palau, including Angaur.
15. The Southwestern Islands, *i.e.*, Sonsorol, Pul, Merir, and Tobi, which stretch from Palau toward Dutch New Guinea.

Kusaie, Ponape, Truk, Yap, Palau, and all of the Marianas are so-called "high islands," being mainly volcanic in structure. The rest of Micronesia consists exclusively of "low islands"—78 atolls and 17 single coral islands. The total land area, inclusive of the British possessions, comprises about 1,250 square miles, inhabited by approximately 100,000 people of Micronesian stock.

The linguistic situation is beginning to emerge with some clarity. There are no Papuan or other non-Malayo-Polynesian languages in the area. The dialects of Yap, Palau, and the Marianas are sharply differentiated from all others, and are apparently affiliated more closely with the languages of the Philippines and Indonesia than with those farther out in the Pacific. Nukuoro and Kapingamarangi are specifically Polynesian. Rather surprisingly, however, they differ from all previously recorded dialects among the Polynesian outliers in not revealing a particularly close relationship to the Western Polynesian speech of Samoa and Tonga. They may even prove to be as distinct from Western as from Eastern Polynesian, in which case their speakers might well represent a remnant of the original Polynesian migrants rather than a later backwash as in Tikopia and Ontong Java. The languages of the rest of Micronesia, including apparently the four islands southwest of Palau as well as all those east of Yap, appear to be fairly closely related and probably deserve collectively the name "Micronesian." Though definitely distinct from Polynesian, their affiliations appear tentatively to point in this direction rather than toward Indonesia and the Philippines.

Since space is lacking to present an analysis of Micronesian culture in all its aspects, I shall confine myself to the field of social organization, and shall attempt some historical reconstructions in connection with a presentation of the distributional evidence. The principles applied are those described in my forthcoming volume on *Social Structure*, and hence need not be explained in detail here.

All the evidence points strongly to the presence of a bilateral social structure of Hawaiian type, coupled of course with the usual Southeast Asiatic tendency toward local endogamy, among the Malayo-Polynesian peoples prior to their wide dispersion. This type of organization predominates in Indonesia and in Polynesia, despite special local developments. In Melanesia, bilateral organization or traces thereof appear precisely among the populations most likely to have been intrusive, the more complex forms of social structure elsewhere being presumably derived from the aboriginal inhabitants prior to the eastward migration of Malayo-Polynesian speakers.

In Micronesia, Kapingamarangi and Nukuoro reveal a bilateral organization of characteristic Polynesian type, as might be expected from their linguistic affiliations. Everywhere else, except possibly in the Southwestern Islands, social structure is strongly matrilineal. How can we reconcile the prevalence of the matrilineate in Micronesia with our hypothesis of an earlier bilateral organization among all Malayo-Polynesians?

Strong support comes from an analysis of the kinship terminology. Any full-fledged unilinear structure, whether matrilineal or patrilineal, requires a fairly rich kinship vocabulary. There is a need, for example, to differentiate cross from parallel cousins, paternal from maternal aunts and uncles, sororal from fraternal



nephews and nieces. Matrilineal societies comparable to those of Micronesia exhibit such differentiation practically everywhere else in the world, whether in North or South America, in Asia, or in Africa. Micronesian kinship systems, by contrast, are marked by an extraordinary paucity of distinct terms. The Trukese, for example, get along with only eight elementary terms—father, mother, child, brother (woman speaking), sister (man speaking), sibling of the speaker's sex, spouse, and sibling-in-law of the speaker's sex. This paucity of terms, however, is specifically characteristic of bilateral structures of the Hawaiian or "generation" type, in which sibling terms are extended to all cousins, parental terms to all uncles and aunts, and terms for children to all nephews and nieces. To be sure, examples are not lacking in Micronesia of new terms developed for new categories of kinsmen, *e.g.*, cross-cousins, but the general impression is distinctly one of unilinear structures in a relatively early phase of adapting a limited vocabulary of traditional kinship terms to a new set of social complexities.

In a few places, this adaptive process seems scarcely to have begun. This is the case, for example, in Ifalik, according to information from E. G. Burrows. Elsewhere, however, the development has proceeded along one of the two lines followed by matrilineal societies all over the world, *i.e.*, toward terminology of the Iroquois or of the Crow type. Both Nauru and the Marshalls have taken the former path, retaining sibling terminology for parallel cousins but developing new words to designate cross-cousins. Ponape, the Mortlocks, Truk, Puluwat, and Yap have followed the other path, developing terminology of the Crow type by classifying the father's sisters' children with relatives of the parental generation and

the mother's brothers' children with one's own or one's siblings' children.

Most of us would doubtless assume that, starting with a Hawaiian or "generation" system, the transition to an Iroquois system would require fewer internal readjustments than that to a Crow system. The Micronesian evidence belies this. Spoehr's excellent report on Majuro shows that the Marshallese, in converting the earlier Hawaiian into an Iroquois system, have found it necessary to develop at least three new terms—for maternal uncle, for sister's child (man speaking), and for cross-cousin of opposite sex. The Trukese, on the other hand, have been able to achieve a Crow system without inventing any new terms. They have simply taken the terms for "father" and "mother," which with typical Hawaiian economy were already used to designate uncles and aunts, grandparents, and parents-in-law as well as the actual parents, and have extended them to one additional category of relatives, namely, to all members of the father's matrilineal lineage irrespective of age, including of course the children of the father's sister. Reciprocal usage results in applying the term for "child" to the children of all the men of one's own lineage, including of course one's mother's brothers' children. Even today, Trukese kinship terminology conforms completely to the generation type in every respect except this reciprocal use of parent and child terms between the members of a matri-lineage and the children of the men of that lineage. This suffices, however, to convert the whole system into the characteristic Crow pattern.

The kinship structure of Micronesia thus yields clear internal evidence of derivation from the Hawaiian pattern which still survives nearly everywhere in Indonesia and Polynesia, and which comparative data demonstrate to be function-

ally associated with bilateral descent. The inference is inescapable that the matrilineate in Micronesia is a fairly recent development. Differentiation of kinship terminology would certainly have developed further if the ancestral Micronesians had already been matrilineal at the time of the original Malayo-Polynesian dispersion.

The problem thus arises of how the Micronesians acquired the matrilineate. My own cross-cultural researches abundantly support Lowie's hypothesis that unilinear descent normally springs from a unilocal rule of residence in marriage, either matrilocal or patrilocal. Such a residence rule assembles in one place—a village, a hamlet, or a ward—a group of males or females who are in fact unilinearly related, together with their in-marrying spouses. In time, proximity tends to emphasize the kinship of this central core of the local group and gradually to convert bilateral into unilinear descent. What may have happened in Micronesia is suggested by the situation in Borneo. On this island, matrilocal residence is the rule nearly everywhere. Descent, however, is still bilateral except in one isolated area. Here, in the Siong branch of the Maanyan tribe, actual exogamous matrilineal sibs have developed out of the groups aggregated by matrilocal residence. In Micronesia, presumably, a similar process started much earlier and has gone much farther, though not quite as far as in full-fledged matrilineal societies elsewhere in the world.

Although kinship adjustments to the matrilineate are only incipient, it should be emphasized that matrilineal descent itself is full-fledged everywhere in Micronesia (excepting, of course, the Polynesian outliers). In addition to lineages, there are exogamous matrilineal sibs in every sub-area, and sometimes these are very

widely diffused. The identical sibs, for example, are found in the Mortlocks, Truk, and the Puluwat-Pulusuk group, and are strictly exogamous over the whole territory.

Not only is matrilineal descent fully elaborated throughout Micronesia, but in many places its original matrilocal basis has for some time been disintegrating. In Guam and the other Marianas, of course, the whole matrilocal-matrilineal system has long disappeared as a result of three centuries of intensive acculturation. Preliminary reports indicate that patrilocal residence is general in both Palau and Yap. For Majuro in the Marshalls, Spoehr reports that patrilocal is at least as common as matrilocal residence. Murphy's data reveal not only that residence in Mokil is exclusively patrilocal today, but also that a true patrilocal extended family organization has come into being. German reports indicate that patrilocal residence is also common or usual in Kusaie, Ponape, the Central Carolines, and the Southwestern Islands. Only in Nauru, the Mortlocks, Truk, and the Puluwat-Pulusuk area, apparently, is the earlier rule of matrilocal residence still intact.

The last three of these sub-areas seem to preserve approximately the type of organization that must once have prevailed throughout Micronesia, and in addition they reveal clearly the factors which have led to modifications elsewhere. The most basic structure is the exogamous matrilineage, localized in a hamlet or section of a village with its eldest competent male as lineage chief. Next in importance is the matrilocal extended family, consisting of a group of married sisters, mothers and daughters, or maternal aunts and nieces with their husbands and children. Third in order of significance is the exogamous matrilineal sib,

which clearly represents the end-product of fission and migration which have scattered the descendants of an original lineage. Spoehr's analysis of Marshallese social structure also emphasizes the primacy of the lineage and strongly corroborates the reconstruction here presented.

On Truk, we discovered two facts of the utmost importance for an understanding of the social history elsewhere in Micronesia subsequent to the acquisition of matrilineal sibs. The first of these is that patrilocal residence is an alternative of long standing in even this strongly matrilineal society. Genealogies extending back to 1800 or earlier demonstrate clearly that patrilocal residence has always occurred in circumstances under which a functioning matrilineal extended family did not exist or could not be established. For example, whenever a matrilineage is reduced to only one or two adult women, too few to maintain an efficient extended family, these women go to live with their husbands and participate in the latter's family and lineage organization. Obviously, this provides a precedent for an increasing frequency of patrilocal residence, such as is found widely elsewhere, whenever local conditions for any reason favor such a change.

Our second significant discovery on Truk was the germinal form out of which a feudal type of political organization and a complex system of social classes could easily evolve. Small feudal states with an elaborate class structure are found everywhere in Micronesia except in the central part of the Caroline chain—in the Puluwat-Pulusuk group, in Truk, in the Mortlocks, and of course in the Polynesian outliers of Nukuoro and Kapin-gamarangi. Petty warring states and stratification into noble and common classes of several levels characterize both the Marshalls and the Gilberts, and a

similar class structure reappears in Nauru. In Kusaie and Ponape, paramount chiefs succeeded in achieving greater stability for their realms, and the former island was actually unified under a single petty king. Social stratification is pronounced in both instances. Skipping the stateless and classless areas in the middle Carolines, we encounter a strictly parallel elaboration of political and status institutions in western Micronesia. For the ancient Marianas, Thompson reports three social classes—nobles, commoners, and slaves—and a complex political structure based on land tenure, with local chiefs in rural districts and superior chiefs in the larger towns. Palau has a number of paramount chiefs, among whom two stand out above the rest, dividing the island into two complex and rivaling political systems. Yap has not achieved quite so high a degree of political integration, for the island is divided into a number of petty feudal states, but some of these have succeeded in extending their sovereignty over the atolls of the Central Carolines for hundreds of miles to the east. With respect to social stratification, however, Yap has gone farther than any other sub-area, for the local culture recognizes no fewer than nine sharply differentiated social classes.

In Truk and the neighboring sub-areas, political integration has not gone beyond the level of the local community, which consists of a small island or a restricted district of a larger island, within which all the residents maintain daily face-to-face relations. Each such local community consists of a number of matrilineages belonging for the most part to different sibs. Each has its own land and is localized in a hamlet or a section of a village, where the married women of the lineage live with their husbands and children and where a men's house is maintained for



the occupancy of the unmarried boys above the age of puberty and of the older men of the lineage when visiting their relatives for social or ceremonial reasons. Political authority in the community is vested in a local chief, who is the head of one of the constituent lineages, typically the one which, according to local tradition, first settled the district. He enjoys theoretically a right of eminent domain over all the land in the community, the other lineages being deemed to have received their holdings from his, and in recognition of his primacy he receives a sort of rental from them in the form of periodic gifts and first fruits from the produce of the land. Lineage chiefs receive similar tribute from their own subjects. Local and lineage chiefs exercise considerable authority and enjoy a large measure of prestige, but they do not constitute a special social class. The influence they exercise is in essence that of the oldest brother over his younger siblings. Their status is official and personal, and does not have the effect, for example, of elevating their families above the general run of the population.

From these facts, it is easy to see how a feudal political structure and an elaborate system of social classes could evolve. All that was necessary to initiate the complexities found in eastern and western Micronesia was military conquest. War between local districts or communities was endemic in Truk and the neighboring atolls, but it rarely eventuated in conquest. It occasionally resulted in transferring the chiefship from one lineage to another within the local community, but victory in war almost never led to the seizure of the lands of the loser by the winner, their incorporation with his own holdings, and the imposition of tribute or feudal dues upon the conquered group, and when it threatened to do so, shifting

alliances among communities usually rectified the situation in a new war.

In a situation like this, however, genuine conquest and the expropriation of land are always a strong likelihood. Once accomplished by an energetic chief, and maintained successfully over a period of time, this would automatically create a petty state uniting two or more local districts. Its organization would necessarily be feudal because based on land tenure and because the conqueror would inevitably demand tribute in accordance with the precedent of periodic gifts of produce from the land to lineage and local chiefs. The enhancement in power and wealth of the new paramount chiefs would greatly accentuate differences in status and encourage confining the succession within a particular family line. This would differentiate the families of rulers, and not alone the chief himself, from the general population. Moreover, defeated lineages whose lands had been expropriated would tend to sink into a condition of dependence and serfdom. In this way, social class distinctions would arise through the very same process that produced political integration.

Western Micronesia, and Ponape and Kusaie in the east, appear to represent the completion of this process with the achievement of relative political stability. In the Marshall Islands, and apparently also the Gilberts, stability has not yet been attained. Petty feudal states and a complex class structure have developed, to be sure, but conflict among paramount chiefs still continued bitter during the Discoveries Period, and their territories never became precisely defined and traditional as, for example, in Ponape and Yap. The Trukese and their immediate neighbors, with all the elements for such a transition already implicit in their own social structure and with examples of its

achievement both to the east and to the west, would almost certainly have initiated a parallel change within a very few generations if Europeans had not arrived to interfere with the process. In Micronesia, consequently, we have been able to catch "on the hoof," so to speak, a process of state development and class formation which has occurred in strikingly similar fashion in other parts of the world, e.g., in Japan, in medieval Europe, and in parts of native Africa.

By way of conclusion, we may summarize the reconstructed socio-political history of Micronesia in the following probable stages:

1. Autonomous and endogamous local communities with a bilateral social organization of Hawaiian type, i.e., the original Malayo-Polynesian social structure which still survives in various localities in both the near and the far Pacific.

2. A similar bilateral organization in which the rule of residence has become normally matrilocal, as in Borneo.

3. A matrilineal organization consisting of exogamous matri-lineages localized in hamlets, arising on the basis of matrilocal residence, with several such hamlets within the still autonomous and endogamous community.

4. A full-fledged matrilineate consisting not only of lineages but also of exogamous sibs developed in consequence of fission and migration, but with as yet no adaptive

modification of the original Hawaiian kinship terminology. Ifalik and the nearby atolls in the Central Carolines are still apparently at this level.

5. A matrilineal organization of the same type in which adaptive changes in kinship terminology have produced Iroquois systems in some regions and Crow systems in others. The Mortlock, Truk, and Puluwat-Pulusuk sub-areas are still at this level.

6. A matrilineal social organization characterized by a marked increase in the prevalence of patrilocal residence, accompanied by a feudal political organization of unstable petty states and by stratification into several differentiated social classes. The Marshall Islands are typical of this level.

7. A social structure with matrilineal sibs and exogamy but with patrilocal residence, patrilineal inheritance, and at least a tendency toward patrilineal succession, accompanied by a stable political organization of petty feudal states with traditionally recognized territories and by a highly elaborate system of social classes. Yap clearly typifies this final level of development, which is also at least approached with various degrees of closeness in Kusaie, Ponape, Palau, and the pre-Spanish Marianas.

*Note.* The Section of Physics and Chemistry held a meeting on October 5, 1948, at which Doctor William F. G. Swann, Bartol Research Foundation, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania, presented a paper entitled *New Problems in Cosmic Rays*, which was illustrated by lantern slides. This has not been received for publication.

PART II.





## SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF TRUK

George P. Murdock and Ward H. Goodenough

THE COMPLEX ATOLL OF TRUK is located in the east central Caroline Islands between 7°7' and 7°41' north latitude and between 151°22' and 152°4' east longitude. It consists of a roughly circular atoll reef enclosing a lagoon nearly forty miles in average diameter. The reef supports a number of low coral islands of which only one has a permanent population. Within the lagoon rise sixteen inhabited volcanic islands ranging in size from a third of a square mile to about nine square miles. The total land area is about fifty square miles, and supports a native population of approximately 10,000. The people are Micronesians; they resemble Polynesians in physical type but are shorter and slighter and appear to have a somewhat larger Melanesian admixture. The Trukese have a relatively homogeneous culture, which is shared in considerable measure by 5,000 inhabitants of a dozen coral atolls and islands extending southeastward to Lukunor (50°29' N, 153°58' E) and westward to Puluwat (7°22' N, 149°10' E). The climate, fauna, flora, and basic mode of life are typical of the equatorial islands of the Pacific. Though discovered as early as 1565, Truk experienced no intimate contacts with Europeans until visited by whalers and explorers in the early nineteenth century. The first mission was established in 1879. Though Spanish sovereignty was recognized in 1886, actual administration did not begin until the arrival of the Germans in 1899. Truk passed into the possession of Japan in 1914 and of the United States in 1945. In the face of these acculturative influences the aboriginal culture has shown remarkable vitality, and most of what has disappeared in fact survives in memory.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The field work on which this paper is based was done in 1947 as part of the Coördinated Investigation of Micronesian Anthropology sponsored by the Pacific Science Board of the National Research Council. Most of the intensive investigation, e. g., genealogical studies of kinship and land tenure, was done on the island of Romonum.

The people of Truk are divided into about forty matrilineal and strictly exogamous sibs (einang),<sup>2</sup> which also extend to the surrounding atolls from Lukunor to Puluwat. None is confined to a single island, and many are widespread, but no island has representatives of all. Besides the regulation of marriage, sibs possess only a single important function, namely, the channeling of hospitality. A native visiting another island or atoll for trade or any other peaceful purpose resorts to a member of his own sib, from whom he can expect shelter, food, and (formerly) sexual hospitality. True moieties are absent, although tradition divides the sibs into one group which is descended from the coconut palm and another which immigrated from a high island called Achaw, now commonly identified with Kusaie.

Functionally far more important than the sib is the matrilineal lineage (eterenges, or more commonly today faameni), characterized by actual common descent in the female line from a remembered ancestress. On a small island or in a district of a larger island the sibs locally represented are usually divided into two or more lineages, between whom there is no more political or other unity than between lineages of different sibs. A lineage averages thirty or forty members, and if large is often divided into sub-lineages (tetten). Status within the lineage depends largely upon seniority. The eldest capable male is the lineage chief (somwonun faameni). He administers the land of the lineage and regulates the economic activities of its members. A female counterpart, the finesomwonun faameni, directs the work of the women. Within a generation the eldest male is called mwääniichi and the eldest female finniichi; both enjoy considerable authority over their juniors.

Each lineage traditionally has its own territory (soopw), common hearth (fanang), men's house (uut), and communal dwelling (imw). The territory consists of a number of named tracts of land, which are divided into plots owned and cultivated by individual members. The

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<sup>2</sup> The spelling of native terms will follow the orthography proposed by S. H. Elbert, Trukese-English and English-Trukese Dictionary (United States Naval Military Government, Pearl Harbor, February, 1947).

common hearth or earth oven is in charge of a senior male in the prime of life, called somwonun fanang, who may be the lineage chief, a classificatory younger brother of his, or the mwääniichi of the next generation. He manages the food supply and cooking for the lineage. Unmarried males above the age of puberty formerly slept in the men's house, and even today leave the parental roof but sleep in the houses of non-taboo relatives. Married men observing rules of sexual continence before war or ceremonial events also slept in the men's house and often do so even today. There is now often only one men's house in a village, used primarily as a communal meeting place.

Until late in the Japanese regime the house of the lineage--or of a sublineage if the lineage were large and subdivided--formed a hamlet at some distance from other dwellings, oftentimes located in the interior of the island. Today these hamlets have been abandoned, and the natives have moved into larger villages at convenient locations along the coast. Even within the present villages, however, the houses of a lineage or at least of a sub-lineage, tend to be clustered together. The dwellings themselves are smaller than formerly, and a modified Japanese house type is supplanting the older thatched houses.

The prevailing rule of residence has always been, and still is, matrilocality. Hamlets thus tended strongly to be inhabited by the women and unmarried children of a lineage, together with the husbands of the women. The men of the lineage resided in other hamlets with their wives. Rarely, however, did they live at any great distance, so that they were able to spend considerable time with their own matrilineal kinsmen. They worked on their own lands as well as on those of their wives, contributed food to the common hearths of both lineages, and were always welcome to eat with their sisters or to spend a night in the men's house of their own lineage.

Essentially the hamlet or sub-hamlet was a large matrilocality extended family. The nuclear family of father, mother, and children, though socially recognized, was overshadowed by the extended family group, and even today is only rarely the residential unit. Although lineage and sub-lineage dwellings have disappeared, the matrilocality extended family is still apparent in clusters of adjacent houses inhabited by a group of matrilineally related women with their husbands and children. Today as formerly, most economic activities are carried on in common within the extended family, which collectively takes care of all dependents.

Marriage is both lax and brittle. Adultery, though theoretically prohibited and punishable, is exceedingly common, and divorce and remarriage are so frequent as to constitute the rule rather than the exception. Monogamy prevails overwhelmingly; complete genealogies for the island of Romonum, going back six or more generations, revealed only a single case of polyandry and only three instances of polygyny. Levirate and sororate unions, though permissible, are neither preferred nor common. Incest taboos and exogamy extend not only to the entire matrilineal sib but also to all members of the father's lineage, with the result that cross-cousin marriage does not occur.

From a purely descriptive or synchronic point of view Trukese social organization appears to be a typical matrilineal and matrilocal system, with minor exceptions which might readily be attributed to acculturation. When, however, its internal dynamics is examined by genealogical methods, noteworthy patrilineal and patrilocal features emerge, and the seeming acculturative exceptions are found to conform to ancient patterns. The patrilineal alternative in the inheritance of real property will be described below under land tenure. Patrilocal residence occurs regularly, in former times as well as today, whenever the number of women closely akin matrilineally is too few to maintain an efficient extended family organization. Thus when a lineage approaches extinction, with only one or two surviving women, they go to reside with their husbands in the hamlets or households of the latter. Patrilocal residence is also a common alternative in inter-island marriages; the woman in such cases has no lineage mates in her husband's district and consequently usually goes to live with his matrilineal relatives, or at least in a house built on his land. Since houses are built by men for their wives rather than for their sisters, a man with considerable land may build a house for his wife and her sister on his own property. This may result in a shift in the location of the entire hamlet of his wife's lineage, or in a split in the lineage. In the latter case it is likely that in time a new fanang (hearth) will be organized and a new uut (men's house) built, and that in this way a new lineage will emerge.

Even more interesting, perhaps, is the possibility of shifting from one matrilineal lineage to another by way of a patrilineal connection. Several instances are



attested in the genealogies. After a patrilocal marriage, either of an immigrant woman or in the case of a decadent lineage, if the woman has several daughters they will establish a matrilocal extended family in the next generation, and a new lineage will be founded or a decadent one reestablished. If, however, there are only one or two daughters for a couple of generations, they will either continue to marry patrilocally or, if they marry matrilocally, they and their children will become assimilated to the lineage with which they reside, i. e., that of the father or grandfather who married patrilocally. In this latter case they observe an additional rule of exogamy, avoiding marriage not only with members of their own sib and of their father's lineage but also with members of the lineage with which they reside and ultimately with any member of the sib to which this lineage belongs. After a few generations the matrilineal descendants will forget their original sib membership and be considered full members of the sib to which their adopted lineage belongs.

Political structure in Micronesia is in general characterized by a striking degree of complexity. Truk and the surrounding coral atolls constitute the outstanding exception. Above the localized lineage with its chief there was aboriginally only a single level of political integration, the district. The district consisted, and still consists, of an area over which one lineage has gained ascendancy. A small island usually forms a single district, whereas a large one will be divided into three or four. The dominant lineage may in some instances be the one which first colonized the island, but in most cases it has attained its position through war. The other lineages are usually graded in rank order, their relative position being closely correlated with the extent of their land holdings.

The chief of the dominant lineage is recognized as district chief (*sōmwonun fōnū*). The basis of his power is his ultimate right, a sort of eminent domain, over all the cultivable land of the district, the other lineages holding their lands theoretically at his pleasure. He collects tribute from the other lineages in the form of periodic gifts and first fruits. He officially opens and closes the all-important breadfruit season, sets the dates for ceremonies in the annual cycle, and exercises over-all direction of the economic activities of his subjects. He is also the traditional

war leader. Although the German and subsequent administrations have accorded him judicial powers, he did not originally possess them. Disputes and crimes were discussed and disposed of at an assembly of the adult men of the district in the men's house of the chief's lineage.

It was considered appropriate for a district chief to have a knowledge of oratory, warfare, cosmology, mythology, the history of the district with special reference to land rights, and a variety of magical skills. A man with such qualifications was known as an itang, and if the district chief was not himself an itang he was usually assisted by one. An itang was greatly respected, and was feared for his magical powers, but he was not a priest nor was he primarily concerned with divination, sorcery, or therapy.

The Germans created, and the Japanese continued, a third level of political integration, the area (finäik or "flag"), under which were consolidated the districts of a large island or of a group of adjacent smaller islands. Under the recent American administration several additional levels of chiefs have been added, forming an unwieldy political hierarchy. Since the area and higher chiefs have been vested with judicial and administrative powers for which the local culture has as yet developed no adequate system of controls, the new complexity in political structure has created potentialities for corruption and despotism which constitute the principal threat to the success of the present administration.

The system of property and inheritance exerts a significant if not a determining influence on Trukese social organization. Movables are individually owned. Property rights in them are based primarily upon manufacture or appropriation. A person may dispose, by gift or by sale, of any artifact which he has made himself. If, however, he makes an object to give to someone else, whether at his own initiative or upon request, he must first secure the permission of his own children, who may appropriate it if he does not do so. Permission is not required to sell the object, but if he does so he must give his children a portion of the proceeds of the sale. The recipient of a gift may not alienate the article by gift during the lifetime of the maker without first securing the permission of the latter, who may reclaim it if he has

not been consulted. He may, however, sell the article without permission, but if he does so he must give the maker a share of the proceeds. Sale by the maker or by a recipient from him with his permission constitutes a definitive alienation of the property title.

The owner of a pig which produces a litter may keep the shoats himself, sell them, or give them to a child or a lineage mate to raise. In the last case, the recipient must give him a share of the pork when the animal is slaughtered or the owner may claim the price of the pig in goods. The recipient, however, has full title to the offspring of the pig given to him. A pig may not be given to a member of another lineage without the permission of the donor's children. Property in chickens parallels that in pigs except that the right of the donor is to a share in the eggs, not in the meat.

Property rights in artifacts, domesticated animals, and other movables are transmitted by inheritance from parent to child. Both sexes participate in inheritance unless the property is appropriate to one sex alone, in which case sons inherit from the father and daughters from their mother. The rule of inheritance is not strictly patrilineal, however, for if a man has no children his sisters' children take precedence over brothers' children and other patrilineal heirs.

The transmission of incorporeal property rights is almost equally matrilineal and patrilineal. The most important of these rights, technological skills and the magical rites (rong) associated with them, are taught by women to their children and by men to both their own and their sisters' children. Transmission to a spouse, insofar as is appropriate, is also permissible. A man may not teach specialized skills and rong to anyone else without first securing the permission of both his own and his sisters' children. If his brother has died, he may impart some but not all of his knowledge to that brother's children. The lore of the itang constitutes a partial exception to the general rule respecting incorporeal property. An itang may teach his son a part of what he knows but never all; only his sisters' children may receive his entire stock of knowledge.

The inheritance of real property is exclusively matrilineal in principle, although even under aboriginal



conditions men not infrequently gave plots of land to their sons during their own lifetime and the legitimacy of such patrilineal transmission was fully recognized. The German administration attempted by law to substitute patrilineal inheritance of land for matrilineal inheritance, and the Japanese administration followed the same policy. The natives resented this violation of their aboriginal custom and found a means of evading the law, namely by transmitting the bulk of their real property by gift to their matrilineal heirs before death. Despite such evasions, nearly fifty years of administrative pressure introduced certain changes. Patrilineal inheritance did take place in many cases, and it acquired a certain legitimacy in the minds of the natives. With the advent of the American administration native custom with respect to land was again recognized, and the insistence on patrilineal inheritance rescinded. Today, matrilineal inheritance is alone recognized for any land of which a man is possessed at the time of his death. It has become customary, however, for most land rights to be transmitted by gift before the owner reaches old age, the latter retaining rights of use until his death. Owners may dispose of land in this way as they wish, either to matrilineal or to patrilineal heirs or to both. It is considered proper, however, for an owner to divide his land approximately equally between matrilineal and patrilineal heirs, giving some preference to that group which is relatively poorer in land.

The cultivable land of Truk is divided into named tracts (eif), each of which is associated with a particular lineage. Tracts vary greatly in size, averaging slightly larger than an acre. The territory (söopw) of a lineage includes a number of tracts, often though not necessarily adjacent to each other. Tracts are for the most part divided into plots (äpär), about three to a tract on the average, each of which is associated with an individual land owner. Offshore waters suitable for fishing, especially fringing reefs, are also divided into named tracts which are similarly owned.

The native system of land tenure is relatively complex. A distinction is made between rights to the land itself (pwün, soil) and usufruct rights to the land and what grows upon it, which are defined as rights to trees (irä). Titles differ in seniority as well as in type, and any plot is subject to a graded series of rights somewhat reminiscent of subinfeudation in European feudal land law. The system may best be illuminated by describing the various types of tenure in the order of their seniority.

1. Eminent domain of the district chief. Under aboriginal conditions the district chief had a paramount claim to all the lands held by the lineages subject to him. This was acquired by conquest and could be extinguished only by conquest. It was manifested in the right to receive tribute in the form of first fruits and periodic gifts of produce from the lands of the subject lineages. If any lineage failed in its tribute obligation, the district chief had the power to confiscate the land and award it to another lineage. This type of tenure has lapsed today, or rather it has been transferred to the colonial administration, whose right to levy taxes and to appropriate property for administrative use is justified thereby.

2. Lineage fee simple. The members of a lineage collectively enjoy a basic claim to all the lands which constitute its traditional territory (soopw). This title, which is administered by the chief of the lineage, may be acquired by settlement, by conquest, by purchase or gift from another lineage, or by patrilineal inheritance from a lineage which has become extinct, and may be extinguished by conquest, sale, gift, extinction of the lineage, or abdicating or forgetting of its claim. Lands secured by a lineage are distributed in tracts and plots to members of the lineage, who thereby acquire intra-lineage usufruct titles (see below). As long as these lands are held by members of the lineage, the lineage chief has the right to receive tribute from them in the form of first fruits and periodic gifts, and he may reallocate abandoned or unused plots. With his permission, however, a usufruct title may be transferred to a member of another lineage, but even after this has occurred any member of the lineage may plant upon any unused portion of the land and enjoy for life the produce from what he has planted.

3. Intra-lineage usufruct tenure. Any member of the lineage which holds the fee simple may secure title to a tract or plot by allocation from the lineage chief or by gift or matrilineal inheritance from another member of the lineage. In contradistinction to the two previous types of land tenure, however, this right is one of usufruct only and does not include any title to the land itself. A usufruct owner may transmit his property to another member of the lineage by gift or bequest, but he may not transfer it to a member of another lineage, e. g., a son,

without the permission of his own lineage chief, and if he does so he can alienate only a portion of his rights, the remainder being residual and transmissible only in the female line. The alienable rights include the right to plant trees or crops on the land, title to the trees which he has planted himself, and the right to the product of all the trees on the land whether planted by himself or his predecessors. What he cannot transmit is the title to the trees planted by his predecessors. For the right to use the produce from these trees the new owner and his heirs must continue to pay first fruits and periodic gifts to the alienator and his matrilineal heirs as long as any of the trees survive, after which this residual right is extinguished. The lineage chief's permission is required because by such a transaction he resigns his claim to first fruits in favor of the alienator.

4. Extra-lineage usufruct tenure. Tenure of this type may be acquired by purchase, gift, or patrilineal inheritance from another usufruct owner, whether the latter is or is not a member of the lineage which holds the fee simple. As in the case of an intra-lineage usufruct title, the rights involved are partly alienable and partly residual and hereditary in the female line. The alienable rights are those of planting on the land and of using the product of all trees and crops growing upon it as well as the title to the trees which the alienator has planted himself. Title to all trees planted by previous usufruct owners is retained by the matrilineal heirs of the persons who have inherited or received the trees from them, and hence cannot be alienated. An extra-lineage usufruct owner owes the usual periodic gifts to the matrilineal heirs of all previous usufruct owners who have title to any trees still growing on the land. If this obligation is not fulfilled, the claimants of residual rights have the power of regaining the usufruct to the trees which they own as well as the other alienable rights of the usufruct owner, who retains only the title to and use of the trees which he himself or his immediate predecessor has planted. As an additional inalienable right each successive extra-lineage usufruct owner acquires for his lineage a potential fee simple claim to the land itself. Of several such claims the prior one becomes converted into a full lineage fee simple title upon the extinction of the

lineage previously possessing this title or when time has extinguished the memory of the previous fee simple title. Prior to the advent of the Germans usufruct titles of the extra-lineage type, though known, were relatively few in comparison to those of the intra-lineage type. As a result of German and Japanese administrative pressure in favor of patrilineal inheritance, however, the relative proportions of the two types have been reversed, and today most of the plots to which a lineage holds fee simple are the private usufruct property of members of other lineages. The actual system of land tenure, nevertheless, has not changed.

5. Life usufruct tenure. The final type of land title results from the fact that any member of the lineage holding the fee simple and any member of the lineage of the full usufruct title holder can, with the latter's permission, plant trees or other crops on the land and can enjoy their product as long as he lives. At his death, however, his rights revert to the full usufruct owner. Members of the lineage with the fee simple, if refused permission by the usufruct owner, can claim all the alienable rights to the land. If they do, the case comes to trial and, depending upon the determination of facts, they may be awarded or refused their claim or allowed it for a portion of the plot involved.

To secure a clear fee simple title to any plot of land in Truk today is a complicated matter. The purchaser must buy up the claims of any life tenants, pay the usufruct owner for his alienable rights, pay the latter's matrilineal heirs for their claim to residual rights, compensate the matrilineal heirs of all prior usufruct owners for their residual rights, and finally pay the chief of the lineage with the fee simple a sum larger than the total of all other payments to obtain title to the land itself. This has contributed to the fact that very little of the land of Truk has thus far been alienated in fee simple to foreign planters or business men, missions, or wealthy native and half-caste individuals.

An outstanding feature of Trukese social organization is the special relationship which prevails between the members of a matrilineal lineage and the children of the men of that lineage, who are collectively called the *öföskür* of the former. This is



correlated with the patrilineal features of the property system--the patrilineal inheritance of movables and to a lesser extent of incorporeal and real property, the control which a man's children exercise over his disposition of personal property, and especially the obligations of a patrilineal inheritor of land toward the matrilineal heirs of the donor, who is usually his father, with respect to their residual rights. The relationship ranks next in importance to that between members of the same lineage, and is similarly characterized by exogamy. It is noteworthy that fee simple rights to land pass, when a lineage becomes extinct, to the öfökür of that lineage and not to another lineage of the same sib, even if it is possible to trace actual genealogical connections with the latter. The relationship is also reflected in the kinship terminology; all members of the father's lineage are terminologically classed with the father and his sister, irrespective of generation, and all öfökür, including the children of a mother's brother or mother's mother's brother, are called "child." The result is a kinship system of the Crow type, despite the characteristic Malayo-Polynesian paucity of distinct denotative terms.

A list of the Trukese kinship terms is given below, with the extensions of each. All terms are given in the first person singular possessive form.

1. semei--father, father's brother, husband of a maternal or paternal aunt, grandfather, spouse's father, male lineage mate of an ascending generation (alternative to 3 for a male speaker), any other male relative of an ascending generation except sons of male lineage mates, father's sister's son, father's sister's daughter's husband, father's sister's daughter's son, any male of the father's lineage, husband of any female of the father's lineage.

2.inei--mother, mother's sister, father's sister, wife of a maternal or paternal uncle, grandmother, spouse's mother, any female relative of an ascending generation except daughters of male lineage mates, father's sister's daughter, father's sister's son's wife, any female of the father's lineage, wife of any male of the father's lineage.

3. ääi mwään--elder sibling of the same sex as Ego (alternative to 4), any older person of Ego's sex, generation, and lineage (alternative to 4), mother's

brother (male speaking only, alternative to 1), any male lineage mate of an ascending generation (male speaking only, alternative to 1).

4. pwii--sibling of Ego's sex (alternative to 3 for an elder sibling), mother's sister's child of Ego's sex (alternative to 3 for an elder cousin), father's brother's child of Ego's sex, any sibmate of Ego's sex and generation (alternative to 3 within Ego's lineage for a person older than Ego), father's sister's son's child of Ego's sex, child of any man of the father's lineage if of Ego's sex, wife's sister's husband, husband's brother's wife, any person who has married a person of the sex, generation, and lineage of Ego's spouse, a special friend of the same sex with whom one has formally agreed reciprocally to adopt the term and accept the associated privileges and responsibilities.

5. feefinei--sister (male speaking), any female of Ego's sib and generation (male speaking), father's brother's daughter (male speaking), daughter of any man of the father's lineage irrespective of generation (male speaking).

6. mwääni--brother (female speaking), any male of Ego's sib and generation (female speaking), father's brother's son (female speaking), son of any man of the father's lineage (female speaking).

7. nei--son, daughter, brother's or sister's child, grandchild, spouse of a son or daughter, any relative of a descending generation unless the connection is traced through a member of the father's lineage, child of any man of Ego's lineage irrespective of generation.

8. pwünüwei--husband, wife, sibling-in-law of opposite sex, spouse of anyone whom Ego calls pwii (see 4 above), anyone whom Ego's spouse calls pwii.

9. öösei--sibling-in-law of Ego's sex, spouse of anyone whom Ego calls feefinei or mwääni (see 5 and 6 above), anyone whom Ego's spouse calls feefinei or mwääni.

Whenever ambiguity arises in the use of any of the above denotative terms, all of which are highly classificatory, the Trukese resort freely to compound descriptive terms. Thus among a person's various nei (7)

a grandchild may be referred to as nōwūn nei (my child's child), the child of a man of one's own lineage may be called nei öfökür, and sex and age distinctions may be made as needed, e. g., nei äät (my immature son), nei mwään (my adult son), nei nengngin (my immature daughter), nei feefin (my adult daughter). The terms listed are used primarily in reference. In address, personal names are strongly preferred, although paapa (father) and maama (mother), presumably derived from English, are occasionally heard.

Patterns of behavior between kinsmen correspond rather closely to terminological categories. Sexual intercourse and marriage are prohibited as incestuous, not only with a person of one's own sib or of one's father's lineage, but also with any consanguineal relative to whom one of the above kinship terms is applied. If the relationship is purely affinal, however, as in the case of wife's mother or son's wife, sex relations are mildly tolerated as with non-relatives. Between persons who call one another pwintwei (8), indeed, sexual intercourse is fully privileged, as between husband and wife.

The responsibility and authority of parents for the education and socialization of their children is shared by other relatives whom the children call "father" (1) and "mother" (2), especially by those within the extended family. A father's authority over his children and others whom he calls nei (7) ceases, however, when they reach puberty; thereafter it is improper for him to speak sharply to them. A man's elder brother, maternal uncle, and others whom he calls ääi mwään (3) exercise authority over him and can reprimand him not only during his childhood but after he becomes adult, and while he is a child one of them acts as custodian of any property which he may have inherited. In general, a person may freely borrow a tool or other artifact from any primary or secondary relative, merely notifying the latter subsequently that he has done so; in the case of an ääi mwään, however, permission to do so must be secured beforehand.

A married man exercises authority over his wife. He contributes labor and food to her extended family and to his own lineage, and divides his time between the two. When widowed or divorced, a man formerly returned to his own lineage and lived in its men's house but took his meals largely with his classificatory "fathers" (1).



Today it is more common for him to go to live with a classificatory "father" (1), e. g., a father's sister's son.

The relationship between brother (6) and sister (5), own and classificatory, is marked by a considerable degree of avoidance. After both have reached puberty they cannot sleep in the same house or use unchaste language in each other's presence, and a brother will not allow others to use obscenity when both he and his sister are present. It is considered tantamount to incest if a man sees the breasts of any woman whom he calls "sister" (5); hence women, who commonly go unclad above the waist in the vicinity of the home, rush to cover their breasts if an own or classificatory brother approaches, and always wear an upper garment when they go out in public. It is likewise considered indecent for a man to view the breasts of the adult daughter of a brother or sister.

A man may joke freely, engage in horseplay, and exchange ribald remarks in public with any woman other than his own wife whom he calls *pwünüwei* (8). He may also joke and use obscenity with men whom he calls "father" (1), "brother" (4), and "son" (7). He is much less free with his *ääi mwään* (3), and as an exception to the class of "fathers" he must observe great restraint with his wife's father. Refraining from obscenity as a token of respect is also required in the presence of a person called *öösei* (9), and ribaldry is prohibited between a man and any woman whom he calls "mother" (2), "sister" (5), or "daughter" (7).

Respectful behavior reaches its apogee in the phenomenon of "crawling," which has become obsolete on Truk in the memory of living informants but still occurs in some of the atolls to the west, e. g., Puluwat. In the presence of a district chief or an itang ordinary people were permitted to stand up or walk erect only if the chief or itang were standing; if he were sitting, squatting, or kneeling they could move in his presence only by crawling on all fours. Identical behavior was observed in two kin relationships, namely, by a woman toward any man whom she called *mwään* (6) and by a man toward any woman whom he called *nei* (7). It was initiated only after both persons had reached puberty, i. e., after the woman had emerged from her first menstrual isolation and after the man had assumed the loin cloth of an adult male. If a woman approached within approximately fifty feet of an own or classificatory brother, or a man of an own or classificatory

adult daughter, the former would call out "Wüütäämo!" ("Please stand up"). The latter would then either rise and allow the former to approach erect, or answer curtly "Opwórooto!" ("Crawl hither"), in which case the former could proceed only by assuming the crawling position.

The relatives who are expected to participate in the ceremonies which attend the major crises in the life of an individual are the members of his own and his father's lineages, their spouses, and the öfökür (children of the men) of both lineages. Among these, the ones who play the most prominent roles are the women of the father's lineage, who are classificatory "mothers" (2), and own and classificatory "children" (7) of both sexes. All relatives in these two categories, for example, are expected to bring gifts when a child is born, when a girl first menstruates, when a man or a woman is married, and when a person dies.

Corrigenda by the junior author based on two months of additional field work: Research on other islands than Romonum revealed the existence of sub-sibs (called by the same terms as lineages) comprising lineages of several districts which share a tradition of common ancestry. Sexual hospitality is associated with the sub-sib, not the sib. Except on Romonum, and for the dominant sib of a district, there is usually only a single lineage of a sib in any district. Commonly, too, only one or two lineages of a district have a men's house, and only a few of them a hearth, members of other lineages frequenting those of their father's lineage. Both levirate and sororate proved to be preferential in theory, though accounting for only a moderate proportion of remarriages. Revision of Romonum genealogies revealed three additional cases of polygyny, resulting from levirate usage. The eminent domain of the district chief derives from the theory that all other lineages hold their lands through patrilineal inheritance from his, the founding lineage. His first fruits and confiscatory rights are interpreted as those of a father who has given land to a child. The term ääi mwään (3) refers primarily to an elder sibling of the same sex, and is applied to maternal uncles only in connection with inheritance or other matters when it is important to distinguish between "fathers" (1) of one's own and one's father's lineage. Like a father, but unlike an elder sibling of the same sex, a maternal uncle ceases to exercise authority over a sister's son who has passed puberty, except in regard to marriage and matters of lineage concern.

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PART III.



### PART III.

#### ADMINISTRATIVE NEEDS AND OBJECTIVES IN MICRONESIA

George P. Murdock

Micronesia consists of four far-flung archipelagoes which extend east and west for nearly 3,000 miles in the mid-Pacific. The first of these--the Gilbert Islands with the outlying phosphate island of Nauru--makes contact with Polynesia in the southeast. It is the only portion of Micronesia which lies south of the equator, and is also the only part not administered by the United States. For this reason, and because it exhibits special problems such as marked population pressure that are not prominent elsewhere in the area, it will not be considered in the following discussion.

The Marianas Islands, the second of Micronesia's four archipelagoes, likewise present a special case. Since 1698, when the Spanish subjugation of the archipelago was finally achieved after thirty years of conflict, the native Chamorros have been subjected to persistent and powerful acculturative influences from western civilization. As a result, they are today thoroughly literate, Christian, and politically sophisticated. To class or treat them as a "primitive people" would be as unjustified as in the case of the Filipinos, the Maori, or the Hawaiians. They are rather to be regarded, like the Indonesians and the Viet-Nameese, as one of the world's hitherto dependent peoples with emergent national aspirations, although, to be sure, a very small one since they number only about 25,000. Among such peoples they are almost unique in lacking a serious population problem, since the repatriation of the Japanese and Okinawans who had settled on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota has left wide leeway for numerical and territorial expansion.

Eliminating these two special cases, we shall concern ourselves exclusively with the two remaining archipelagoes of Micronesia--the Marshall and Caroline Islands. Both are administered by the United States as part of the Trust Territory of the Pacific under the United Nations. Together they include 62 coral atolls, 15 single coral islands, and the five important "high islands" of Kusaie, Ponape, Truk, Yap, and Palau with a total land area of 600 square miles and a native population of about 50,000.



Throughout this area fundamental conditions are essentially the same. In general, despite local differences in such matters as the degree of political integration and social-class elaboration, the aboriginal culture had everywhere attained approximately the same level of development. Acculturative influences have been relatively recent and, with the possible exception of Kusaie, insufficient to produce really profound changes in the aboriginal culture. To be sure, uninterrupted contact with Europeans dates from the whaling period, beginning about 1825, and was intensified after 1852, when missionaries first arrived, but actual administration by foreign colonial powers did not begin until about 1885 in Yap, Ponape, and the Marshalls and until the present century elsewhere in the area. Under German rule, and even under the Japanese after 1914, the native populations were left relatively undisturbed, with the result that local cultures are everywhere still functional and still essentially aboriginal in character.

Another general characteristic is that the old subsistence economy has not been destroyed or converted to a monoculture dependent upon the fluctuations of world markets. There are, to be sure, a few private coconut plantations, but most of the exported copra is produced on native lands and processed by natives. Two other important pre-war exports, shells and dried fish, were produced mainly by immigrant Japanese and Okinawans. Contract labor has been used to exploit the phosphate deposits on Angaur and previously also on Mauru, but never on a scale sufficient to disorient the economy. The islands are probably fortunate in lacking natural resources rich enough to attract foreign exploiters. The inhabitants therefore continue to supply their own basic requirements and to raise exportable commodities only to the extent necessary to obtain the few foreign products they really need.

There are no serious race problems to perplex administrators in either the Marshalls or the Carolines. The Japanese, who in 1940 numbered nearly 30,000 in addition to military personnel, were all repatriated in 1946. Americans in the area consist exclusively of the naval administrative personnel, a few missionaries and a handful of transient scientists and technicians. There are also a few German and Spanish missionaries and an occasional alien civilian, for example, a Belgian planter and his family on Ponape and a Korean dentist on Truk. Half-castes with European or Oriental blood are not uncommon, but they create no social complications since the



prevailing system of matrilineal descent operates to integrate them automatically into the native social structure. Nowhere in the area, therefore, are the inhabitants faced with a group of Europeans interested in exploiting them, with a body of Asiatics with whose superior energy and industrial skill they are compelled to compete, or with an unassimilable caste of mixed bloods.

Another fortunate factor in the local situation is the absence of pressing population problems. Only on the small atoll of Mokil, east of Ponape, is increasing population relative to the available supply of land a serious issue at present, and a ready solution is available through migration. Elsewhere populations are usually maintaining themselves and exhibiting so modest a natural increase that it may well be a century before pressure on the available means of subsistence becomes really threatening. The most serious demographic problem, indeed, is that of arresting the slow decline in numbers which has persisted in Yap and the neighboring atolls throughout the Spanish, German and Japanese periods.

A public health program is neither faced with such complexities as prevail in Melanesia nor likely seriously to aggravate population problems as in Puerto Rico and many other tropical regions. Pulmonary and other diseases of world-wide distribution are not particularly prevalent, nor do the people suffer from serious dietary deficiencies. Mosquitoes are present, and cause a certain amount of filariasis, but the anopheline species and consequently malaria are absent. Among the common tropical complaints, yaws and intestinal parasites are especially common, but both yield readily and spectacularly to modern methods of treatment. The medical personnel of the United States Navy have made noteworthy progress in controlling health conditions, and the natives are gratefully aware of the improved situation. The hospitals operated at central points, the periodic visits to outlying islands for sanitary supervision and medical services, and the local dispensaries manned by specially trained native medical practitioners give every promise of coping satisfactorily with the public health problem. Adequate dental care, however, has not yet been made as widely available as could be desired.

The favorable conditions described above are partially offset by certain special disadvantages. Introduced pests, for example, are a serious economic

threat in some regions. Thus, the rhinoceros beetle has decimated the coconut plantations on Palau, and the giant African snail, introduced by the Japanese for food, has become a menace on Ponape and some other islands. The administration has sent out competent scientists to study these problems, and on their advice has brought in natural parasites for control purposes.

One geographical handicap creates difficulties perhaps unparalleled elsewhere in the Pacific, if not in the world. This is the fact that the small population is scattered on tiny islets which are spread over a segment of the earth's surface nearly as large as Australia or the United States itself. Under these circumstances, the maintenance of regular interisland air and steamship services, so necessary for the dispensing of administrative services as well as for travel, transportation, and trade, becomes exceedingly difficult and costly. Without them, economic development and good administration as well-nigh impossible. No significant portion of their cost, however, can ever be derived from local taxation, and there is always a possibility that the home government may find here a particularly attractive spot for budgetary economies.

With some of the basic factors in the situation before us, we can turn to the objectives of the American administration in the Trust Territory, or more specifically in the Marshall and Caroline Islands. Objectives in the administration of dependent peoples have ranged from realistic to idealistic. Realistic objectives have usually been directed--sometimes frankly, sometimes with elaborate rationalizations--primarily toward the material advantage of the governing power and its nationals. At its worst, this has led to the extermination or virtual enslavement of the native population and to the dispossession of their lands for the accommodation of settlers or for the establishment of plantations or exploitative industries. At its best, imperialistic penetration has been palliated by compensatory medical, educational, and social services, and even by a modest measure of political representation.

Idealistic objectives have commonly wavered between two diametrically opposed goals. One stresses education, missionization, and every other channel of acculturation with the aim of the ultimate complete absorption of the dependent people as part of the body politic of the rulers. The other stresses the values inherent in all cultures and the disruptive aspects of acculturation, and seeks to protect the natives from outside contacts and to preserve them as a sort of living ethnological museum.

The United States, in dealing with its own aboriginal Indian population, has followed first the realistic policy in its most extreme form and then successively the two idealistic policies. None has met with noteworthy success. When we became a colonial power a half century ago, we groped fumblingly toward a new policy for the administration of our recently acquired Pacific possessions. That which we eventually formulated and pursued is certainly not above criticism. As a nation, however, we are not ashamed that we were able to yield independence to the Philippines without being forcefully expelled and without leaving behind us any notable residue of resentment. Even if our Philippine policy is not without blemish, we know of none elsewhere in the colonial world that seems to us to have succeeded better, and we are disposed to follow the same precedent in administering the Trust Territory. Moreover, we interpret our trusteeship agreement with the United Nations as authorizing us to do so.

It may be, of course, that our policy will be modified. We may even revert to one of the idealistic programs which have prevailed in our Indian service. I am assuming, however, the continuation of the policy which I have heard expressed repeatedly by responsible naval administrators from Washington to Guam and which I have myself seen essentially carried out in the islands themselves.

What especially characterizes this policy is that it does not presume to determine in advance the ultimate goals of cultural, social, economic, and political evolution in Micronesia. In this respect it differs fundamentally from the aforementioned realistic and idealistic policies, in each of which the governing power decides what the future of the dependent people shall be. This may be subjection to "white supremacy," or the role of a junior partner entrusted with a minority vote, or complete cultural assimilation and political amalgamation, or indefinite status as wards under the protection of a benevolent guardian. In rare instances the policy may even look forward specifically to ultimate national independence. But it seems never to have been envisioned that the choice as between these and perhaps other objectives might be left to the dependent people to decide for themselves, even when the governing nation professes the self-determination of peoples as the cornerstone of its own democratic political philosophy.

Yet this, as I see it, is precisely the over-all policy of the present administrators of the Trust Territory. Never have I heard a responsible naval officer advocate the opening up of the islands for unrestricted immigration or commercial exploitation, and I have repeatedly seen them belie any such objective in their actions. I have never encountered any advocacy of a conscious program of acculturation and assimilation, and only rarely have I heard the opinion that we should protect the natives from all disrupting contacts with the outside world and preserve them as living museum specimens. I cannot even recall expressions of convictions concerning the ultimate political future of the islands--whether, for example, it should be independence as in the case of the Philippines or probable statehood as in the case of Hawaii. The attitude of the present administrators, from top to bottom of the naval hierarchy, seems rather to be that they have a job to do and that history, not they, will determine ultimate goals.

It is thus fairly clear that the long-range objectives in the administration of the Trust Territory--acceptable to the United Nations, congruent to the American political philosophy, and congenial to the personnel charged with its execution--is to leave the local inhabitants to work out their own social destiny. Immediate administrative objectives, to which we may now turn our attention, are necessarily set in terms of this long-range goal.

Since the admission in large numbers, either of Asiatics for labor and settlement or of Europeans and Americans for commercial or industrial exploitation, would seriously curtail the ability of the natives to make their own decisions, both are subjected to severe limitations. Since only a healthy and economically secure people can be expected to choose wisely, great emphasis is laid upon public health, the control of insect pests, and similar services, and attempts to stimulate production and trade are guided by an awareness that the local economy should not be keyed so closely to world markets as to make its prosperity dependent wholly thereupon. Foreign trade is conducted primarily through a subsidiary of the administration, the Island Trading Company, but insofar as possible this company leaves the development of commerce and industry in the islands to native enterprise.



The administration is especially alert to the danger of the alienation of land, and this is surrounded with stringent safeguards. Since missionaries are actuated by idealistic objectives, which they are inclined to impress upon the natives, the administration steers a careful middle course with respect to them. It admits and gives facilities to both Protestant and Catholic missionaries, since the natives want them, being Christian and approximately equally divided between the two sects. But it refuses to assign to them, as they would like, the responsibility for providing educational and medical services, which would make the people dependent upon them, and it refuses to incorporate sectarian views, for example of marriage and divorce, in its civil legislation. Moreover, it resists the tendency of the missionaries to encroach on native land holdings. Even if the missionaries are not entirely happy under this compromise, the natives appear to be.

Education faces unusually serious practical difficulties. The policy contemplates offering instruction in the native vernacular with optional courses in English, which the people in most of the islands are eagerly clamoring for. There are at present, however, very few teachers capable of giving even elementary instruction and still fewer who can speak English, much less teach it. Teacher training programs are under way in each administrative center, but it will be years before a really satisfactory public school system will be in operation.

A special problem arises from the fact that the inhabitants of the Marshall and Caroline Islands speak about ten distinct and mutually unintelligible languages, which must be reduced to writing and used in the preparation of textbooks before adequate instruction can be offered in the vernacular. This had never been done for some languages, and had been done very badly for the others, at the time when the present administration took over. The Navy has sent a number of trained linguists into the field to study the languages by modern methods, prepare grammars, and suggest suitable orthographies for reducing them to writing. On Ponape, for example, a skilled linguist worked out a simple but scientific orthography which at last account had been accepted by both the Catholics and Protestants of the island as a replacement for their two different and sadly defective alphabets. There is every prospect, therefore, that the linguistic difficulties will be satisfactorily overcome, as they must be if the natives are not to be saddled in the future with a non-phonemic monstrosity as bad as or worse than that used by speakers of English.



It is to be expected that the content of education will be adapted to the special needs and demands of the Micronesians themselves. Present plans already envisage an institution at the college level, probably on Guam, which will be open to all who wish and can qualify for a higher education, and there is no reason to doubt that ultimately a small number may qualify for advanced studies at the University of Hawaii or other institutions. Presumably, however, the administration will exert no special pressure in this direction. It will merely be prepared, as usual, to offer services and facilities when and if the need for them develops spontaneously.

The central problem in the administration of a dependent people is, of course, that of government itself. If they are to determine their own ultimate destiny, they can naturally do so only through their own political organs. This prescribes that the administrative technique shall be that known as "indirect rule," and it is this technique which American administrators have adopted. Local political institutions have been preserved intact, insofar as possible, and the dispensing of justice, the levying and expending of taxes, and other governmental activities are largely conducted by and through them. The American administrative unit stands, as it were, partly at their side to offer advice and provide services, and partly over them to correct abuses. This arrangement works very well on the whole, since nearly everywhere the natives are reasonably satisfied with their traditional forms of government. Even the hereditary feudal chiefs who rule in the Marshalls and in Kusaie, Ponape, Yap, and Palau in the Carolines seem to command, in the main, the support of their people.

The administration would be remiss, however, if it did not recognize the recurrent possibility that individual native officials may abuse their power and forfeit their popular support, and also if it did not recognize the inevitability of political change as the native cultures themselves undergo modification. Hence it must be, and is, prepared to step in and assist the people in removing corrupt or tyrannical officials as they appear, and it also stands ready to facilitate changes in political forms or personnel by making democratic procedures available when and if a popular demand for them arises. It is not disposed, however, to condemn existing political institutions simply because they seem undemocratic to idealists at home, and it shows an understandable impatience when these idealists advocate the immediate introduction of Anglo-

Saxon political and judicial institutions in all their varied detail. It will not resist such changes if the natives want them; under such circumstances, indeed, it would help expedite them. But it senses that it would be untrue to its over-all policy if it did not leave the decision to alter their forms of government in the hands of the natives themselves.

The Navy administrators have, of course, made mistakes, some of them serious. But they seem to have erred as much on one side as on the other. If they have sometimes installed an official without sufficiently ascertaining his right to the position according to native usage, only to discover later his inability to function satisfactorily, they have also on occasion prematurely judged that an official has lost public support and have ordered an election, only to have him overwhelmingly voted back into office as the rightful claimant over an admittedly more popular candidate. Such experiences have given them a healthy respect for local institutions which idealists at home have not always shared.

If there is one thing about the Navy's administration of the islands which has gratified--and, I may add, surprised--anthropological scientists, it is this respect for native cultures. It has been manifested over and over again--in turning for help to Professor Felix M. Keesing of Stanford University in setting up a school for the training of administrators, in sending anthropologists into the islands in 1946 to conduct an economic survey, in financing the CIMA (Coordinated Investigation of Micronesian Anthropology) expedition whereby the Pacific Science Board of the National Research Council sent 42 anthropologists to conduct detailed field studies in the islands during 1947 and 1948, and still more recently in creating positions for applied anthropologists on the staffs of the administrative units in Palau, Truk, and the Marshalls. That these actions are not a polite gesture, but reflect a genuine intention to adapt administrative programs in the islands to local needs and cultural conditions, is attested by the fact that every important recommendation for administrative improvement made by myself and associates on the CIMA team in Truk has subsequently been put into effect.

Administrative experience and anthropological research have alike demonstrated how fundamentally conditions, attitudes, needs, and aspirations differ from one island group to another. Three examples must suffice.

The Palauans are as eager to adopt Western civilization as were the Japanese at the time of the Meiji Restoration. The natives of Yap wish only to be left alone so that they may pursue their traditional mode of life undisturbed. The Trukese desire certain material things from us, but seem quite content with their own social institutions. Our present policy is to permit each people to set its own acculturative pace. This requires that we avoid prescribing any detailed program for the entire area and that we allow each administrative unit wide flexibility in adapting a few simple and humane principles to the varying needs of the different islands. The outcome of this pluralistic policy will be watched with interest by the social scientists of the world.

Note: A considerable number of Dr. Murdock's findings as a participant in the CIMA project appear in the CIMA Final Report of Dr. Ward H. Goodenough, Yale University, Property, Kin, and Community: The Social Organization of Truk, Report No. 14 of this series.